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HIGH COMMISSIONER NICHOLAS:
3 YEARS AS HEAD OF MISSION

CONTENTS

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6/

ON THE COVER *H.E. Garvin Nicholas - a look back on 3 years as Head of Mission*

12/

*Havan ceremony at **Divali celebration***

30/

*Brian Lara and Miss T&T UK at **World Travel Market***

32/

*H.E. President Anthony Carmona & TTHC Staff at **Commonwealth Fair 2013***

16/

*Los Paranderos de Londres at the **High Commissioner's Diplomatic Christmas Reception***

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Complete the National's Registration Form online or in person at the T&T High Commission.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

4/ International Day of Persons with Disabilities messsage from H.E. President Anthony Carmona

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

5/ Divali Message from Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

NEWS FROM THE MISSION

6/ Celebrating the High Commissioner's tenure

10/ T&T High Commission celebrates Eid-ul-Adha in London

12-15/ T&T High Commission hosts Divali Celebrations

EYEONTRADE

22/ High Commissioner talks Energy, Collaboration with Norway

24/ High Commissioner sparks interest from major Nordic investors for TT business

TOURISM

30/ Trinidad and Tobago wows at World Travel Market, London

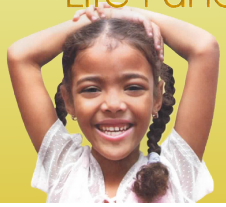
32/ T&T High Commission shines at Commonwealth Fair

FEATURES

34/ Diaspora writers take centre stage at T&T High Commission

38/ Nationals Meeting

children's Life Fund



The Fund was Created and established in November 2010 by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Children's Life Fund's aegis is to provide urgent relief for children, assisting those who live in the shadow of disease and illness. The Fund has also received support from the renewed charity medical Schriners Children's Hospital. In addition, all Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament contribute 5% of their salary to the Fund.

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For more information on The Children's Life Fund please visit www.clfa.org.tt

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HIS EXCELLENCY, GARVIN NICHOLAS

My dear nationals of Trinidad and Tobago,

My warmest greetings go out to you. The festive season of Christmas is upon us, a time for celebration, thanksgiving and reflection.

This Christmas, I am celebrating my three-year anniversary as High Commissioner, a role which has afforded me the opportunity to advance Trinidad and Tobago's national product in the United Kingdom and Europe, and secure foreign investment in our dynamic tourism and trade industries.

In the past three years, I have developed strong ties with my Diaspora, the Diplomatic community, within the Commonwealth, as well as the Government and People of the United Kingdom. We have found common ground amidst our differences, and have worked together to achieve a great deal.

During my tenure, our Mission has undertaken numerous initiatives to showcase Trinidad and Tobago's unique culture. Our 2012 Cultural Village, which commemorated Trinidad and Tobago's 50th anniversary of Independence, was a tremendous event which featured our diverse ethnic, religious and cultural influences in a way never before undertaken.

The High Commission has hosted various events throughout the years which celebrate our diverse society. Our participation in high profile fairs and festivals, including

The World on Regent Street and the Ipswich Arts Festival have highlighted our rich national product. Indeed, during my time as High Commissioner it is evident that the people of the UK and Europe are becoming increasingly more cognisant of Trinidad and Tobago as a unique, premier destination.

Trinidad and Tobago is also being recognised as an attractive business hub. In my travels throughout the UK and Europe, my colleagues and I have been able to attract significant direct investment in the many opportunities now available as a result of our government's drive to diversify our economy from oil and gas dependence.

As we look towards 2014, I am confident that we are moving towards a bright future. My government's policies which continue to build on the Millennium Development Goals have set out a strong path for social and economic development. I certainly look forward to working with you as we strive to ensure that our country and our people achieve their greatest potential.

To my nationals, your support has meant the world to me. Your wellbeing remains my priority and I will continue to work to the best of my ability to champion your causes and secure your welfare.

To my staff, I thank you for all of your assistance and professionalism throughout the years. Your efforts have been instrumental in allowing me to perform my duties at the level I have done.

I am also thankful to my colleagues in the Diplomatic community for their gracious assistance, as well as those on the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth, who have been truly outstanding as we forged ahead despite myriad challenges.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. My wife, Dr. Nicola Alcala and my son Alexei have been my greatest support.

As we celebrate this joyous season, I urge you to keep the true meaning of Christmas close to your hearts. As we keep in mind the suffering of so many around the world, it is my hope this Christmas that we can rejoice in the love of our family and friends and give freely of our time and energy to make our communities better and brighter.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and share my best wishes to you for a happy and prosperous 2014.

Sincerely,

H.E. Garvin Nicholas

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MESSSAGE FROM H.E. PRESIDENT ANTHONY CARMONA

On 13th December, 2006 the international disability movement received an extraordinary boost with the adoption of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. When the convention was opened for signature on 30 March, 2007 it set a record for the highest number of signatories of a UN Convention on its opening day. This sent a strong message that, after decades of work geared to changing attitudes and approaches to persons living with disability, society was now ready to embrace and accept a large but marginalized demographic which endured, and continues to endure, physical, social, economic and attitudinal challenges to its independence and equality in the eyes of others.

Today as we celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, its theme of "Break Barriers, Open Doors: for an inclusive society and development for all" must resonate in all of our hearts and minds. On Thursday, 28th November, 2013 to mark the observance of this important day, the University of the West Indies' (UWI) Academic Support/ Disabilities Unit hosted a Public Lecture featuring an exemplar in the person of Senator the Honourable Kerryann Ifill, President of the Senate of Barbados. The Honourable Senator is the first visually impaired person to graduate from the UWI Cave Hill Campus, Barbados and she did so with a BSc in Sociology and Psychology,

His Excellency Anthony Carmona, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

and then went on to earn her MBA from Durham University in the United Kingdom. She is also the first female, the first visually impaired person, and the youngest person to be appointed as President of the Senate in Barbados. In her address however, Senator Ifill hinted at a reality that society has yet to fully appreciate when she stated "We are the one club that welcomes everybody". As our medical prowess increases, our life expectancies and those of people with life threatening physical injuries are also increasing. As a result, there is an increasing number of persons living with disabilities and they are living longer with the potential to lead fulfilling and beneficial lives.

This however is a pyrrhic victory given the issues that the differently abled face each and every day of their lives. Apart from the open insensitivity and biases of others in society, they endure a 95% unemployment rate, reduced education opportunities and higher costs of living, all as a result of the short-sightedness of those who should know better. The differently abled are not asking for charity. They do not want hand-outs. All they want are the rights and privileges to which they are entitled as citizens of this Republic. These rights and privileges can be augmented by giving life to instruments such as the Treaty of Marrakesh which facilitates access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled. They can be furthered through our support of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities.

Both my wife and I are patrons of various organisations which play active roles in improving the lives of persons living with disabilities so we are aware of the valiant efforts being made by members of our society. Regrettably, they are in the minority. We therefore urge all citizens to strive for inclusivity for our differently abled brothers and sisters. Let us assume the role of advocate as we strive for greater acceptance and respect for persons living with disabilities. Let us remember that they are first and foremost persons who happen to be differently abled and not differently abled people who happen to be men, women and children.

DIVALI MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR

Fellow citizens,

Namaste.

Once again our nation celebrates the most auspicious and joyous occasion of Divali. It is celebrated by Hindus around the world, and, for most Hindus, marks the beginning of a New Year and a New Life, unmarred by the shadows of a painful past.

Over time, Divali has become an event on the national calendar and has been increasingly embraced by citizens as a reason for nationwide celebration and heritage appreciation, which speaks to the diversity and pluralism that defines our nation's character.

Divali is certainly the biggest and the brightest of all Hindu festivals. It is the festival of lights which literally illuminates the country with its brilliance, and dazzles all with its joy. All the simple rituals of Divali have significance and a story to tell.

The illumination of homes with lights and the skies with firecrackers is an expression of obeisance to the heavens for the attainment of health, wealth, knowledge, peace and prosperity.

Fellow citizens, Divali is not a festival of light in order that we may light deyas and fireworks. These are certainly wonderful ways of expressing our joy and happiness. But, they are not the only or true meaning of "light." Divali is a festival of the light which dispels the darkness of our ignorance; it is a festival of the light which shows us the way on our journey through life.

The Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The purpose is not to glorify the light of the deya, or the light of the firecracker. The purpose is to glorify the light of God. It is He who bestows the real light, the everlasting light upon the darkness of this mundane world. A deya burns out and fireworks are momentary visual experiences. But, the light of a still mind and the fireworks of a heart filled with bhakti are divine and eternal; these are what we should be celebrating.

In each legend, myth, and story of Divali the significance of the victory of good over evil always rings through; and it is with each Divali, and the lights that illuminate our homes and hearts, that this simple truth finds new reason and hope. From darkness unto light – a light that empowers us to commit ourselves to good deeds and which brings us closer to divinity.

Dear citizens, the light of Divali should always be within us. It should symbolize a personal relationship with God, our families, and each other. We must allow the divine light to penetrate inward, for only there will it have lasting benefit. One deya, lit with a pure heart, a conscious mind and an earnest desire to be free from ignorance is far "brighter" than 1000 deyas, lit in simple unconscious revelry.

It is a time to turn inward and light the lamps of knowledge and truth in our hearts and minds so that we can dispel the forces of darkness and ignorance within us and allow our innate brilliance and goodness to shine forth. Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is the principal deity associated with this festival. During Divali we ask her for assistance in cultivating and accumulating spiritual wealth, such as compassion, forgiveness, and loving-kindness.

Indeed, we must all ask ourselves what sort of prosperity are we praying for? All too often, we infer wealth to mean money, possessions, and material pleasures. This is NOT the true wealth in life; this is not what makes us prosperous. It is only God's presence in our lives which makes us truly rich.

Fellow citizens, Divali affords us the opportunity to acknowledge and better understand our prejudices, negative attitudes, and bad habits so that we may enhance the process of positively transforming ourselves and our beloved country.

With this in mind, I wish to reiterate my commitment to the introduction of a National Conversation – a unique dialogue between government and the people – where views and ideas can be mutually ▸▸

exchanged. My government certainly looks forward to continued meaningful and constructive dialogue with our Hindu brothers and sisters, and indeed all heads of religious organizations, in this regard. It is a shared responsibility to ensure a better Trinidad and Tobago for ourselves and our children.

I am of the view that in speaking to each other across the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago a better understanding will emerge among all interest groups, ensuring that we can arrive at the best solutions and find common purpose for the greater good of all of us and our country. Working together is an essential ingredient to success and integral to resolution.

Now is the time not only to discover how we can be more loving, kind, and respectful towards one another, but also to foster harmony and promote the universal prerequisites of love and the light of Truth and understanding among all citizens. It is a spiritual 'fresh start' which should be embraced by all who understand the concept of forgiveness and re-affirmation.

God has given each and every one of us unique talents and abilities. How we use these will determine how "successful" we really are.

Let us all look forward to the coming year with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to our future aspirations. Let us, together, through collaboration and consensus, decide how we can build a better and more prosperous Trinidad and Tobago.

On behalf of my government, family, and all good citizens, I extend sincere best wishes to all who celebrate this wonderful festival.

On this auspicious festival of lights, may the glow of joy, prosperity, peace, and happiness illuminate your lives and your homes.

Shubh Divali.

Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, MP
Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

CELEBRATING 3 YEARS AS HEAD OF MISSION

In the three years since His Excellency Garvin Nicholas arrived in 2010, the impact he has made on the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission to the United Kingdom is nothing less than indelible.

High Commissioner Nicholas has led the Mission with a dignified and measured strength, while still maintaining a warm and open relationship with the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora in the United Kingdom. Staff members have described H.E. Nicholas as "a true High Commissioner".

It has been an unremitting three years for the High Commissioner, who has worked tirelessly to propel the profile of Trinidad and Tobago on the world stage. H.E. Nicholas brims with pride when speaking of his home country, and it is this genuine passion which drives his desire to champion national interests.

An outstanding illustration of this was 2012's Trinidad and Tobago Cultural Village. The month-long Cultural Village coincided with the Olympic Games and was in many ways a watershed moment for Trinidad and Tobago's cultural product. The Cultural Village boasted an array of mediums such as music, dance, drama, literature, film, cuisine, as well as business and tourism showcases. Locals and foreigners alike immersed themselves in Trinidad

Pictured: 1) *Carnival dancers at The Cultural Village, 2) H.E. Garvin Nicholas & wife welcomes Rudolph Walker, OBE at the Launch of The Cultural Village, 3) Pan workshop for all ages at the Cultural Village.*

and Tobago's culture and vowed to visit our islands to experience the warmth of our people and beauty of our lands for themselves.

Throughout this time, visitors were struck by the hands-on approach taken by the High Commissioner to ensure the smooth operation of the Cultural Village. This proactive style has been a trademark of H.E. Nicholas' tenure. The High Commissioner has been an example to staff, showing that no task is ever too arduous or too menial to undertake when it comes to the advancement of our national product.

H.E. Nicholas has led the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago's culture all around the United Kingdom to Liverpool, Scotland, Wales, Ipswich, Bournemouth and Birmingham. He has been influential in the development of Tourism and Trade interest in Europe, via his outreach visits to Germany, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The High Commissioner has been unrelenting in his interactions with the international business community, and has been successful in attracting significant Direct Investment to Trinidad and Tobago.

Within the Commonwealth, H.E. Nicholas has played an influential role. His tenure coincided with Trinidad and Tobago being the Chair in Office of the Commonwealth and being a member of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). The High Commissioner assisted in guiding the implementation of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) recommendations, the development of a Commonwealth Charter that codified the principles outlined in the Port of Spain CHOGM in 2009, and the implementation of a Strategic Plan for moving the Commonwealth forward, ensuring a focus on development of people in conjunction with education, healthcare and women's empowerment.

Throughout his tenure, H.E. Nicholas has been dedicated to ensuring the wellbeing of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora in the United Kingdom. At the monthly Nationals' Meeting, the High Commissioner encourages nationals to articulate their issues and concerns, offering to assist to the best of his ability.

Nationals' connection to Trinidad and Tobago has continuously been strengthened by the various cultural events hosted by the High Commissioner, including celebrations for Indian Arrival Day, Emancipation, Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day, Divali, Eid and Christmas.

The High Commissioner opened up his residence to nationals, enabling them to interact with the Diplomatic Corps and Business Community. These events have certainly brought nationals closer to the Mission, enabling them to reignite their national pride and sense of community.

H.E. Nicholas' indefatigable spirit and accomplishments

Above: *The High Commissioner celebrates his award with wife Dr. Nicola Alcala*

were recognised this year when he was honoured with the award for Diplomat of the Year from the Americas. This was a shining moment for the entire High Commission, an acknowledgement of exceptional leadership and successful promotion of Trinidad and Tobago on the world stage.

2013 has certainly been an eventful year for the High Commission; one marked with numerous proud and exhilarating memories. As we look towards the New Year, we are confident that the high standards set by H.E. Nicholas

Above: *H.E. Garvin Nicholas celebrating with his family and nationals at the Interfaith Service held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Independence of Trinidad & Tobago in 2012.*

▶▶ will enable the Mission to continuously exceed our own expectations, and make our Diaspora proud to be nationals of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Staff of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission for the United Kingdom extends our sincere appreciation to High Commissioner Nicholas as he marks three years of a successful and impactful tenure.

Pictured: *H.E. Garvin Nicholas and High Commission Staff with the Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar during her visit to the Mission in 2011*

T&T HIGH COMMISSIONER CALLS FOR COMMONWEALTH COOPERATION AT CHOGM

Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas has issued an ardent call for greater interaction among Commonwealth Associated Organisations and Civil Society Organisations with Ministers and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The High Commissioner called for enhanced relations among the bodies during this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka. Representing Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Winston Dookeran at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Roundtable with Associated Organisations and Civil Society, High Commissioner Nicholas emphasised the important role played by these organisations in connecting government with the people.

The Roundtable discussion, chaired by Sri Lanka's Minister of External Affairs Prof. Gamini Peiris dealt with the concerns of associated organisations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) among others, as well as civil society bodies dealing with youth, human rights and climate change.

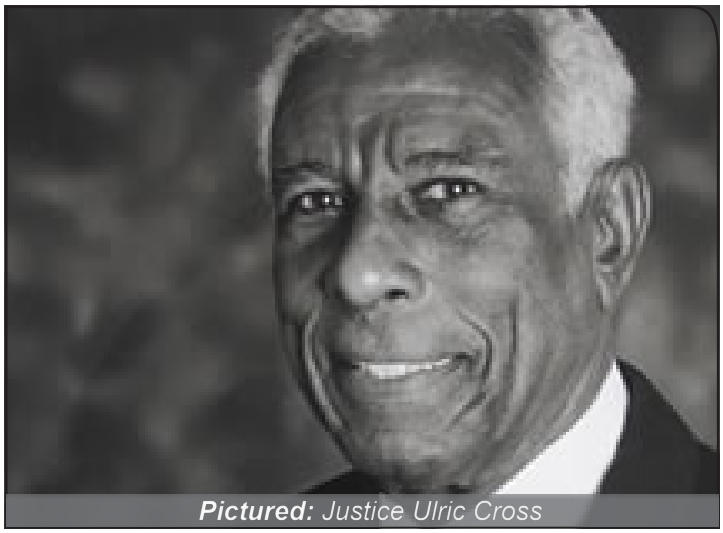
Above: *H.E. Gavin Nicholas stands in front of the T&T national flag at CHOGM*

Foreign Ministers and representatives from all Commonwealth countries participating in Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2013 were present.

During the Roundtable discussion, H.E. Nicholas welcomed the Civil Society Perspectives for a Commonwealth Post 2015 Development Agenda 2013 Outcome Document. H.e. Nicholas has consistently advocated for greater prominence to be given to the Development Agenda, which would address critical issues such as Women's Political, Social and Economic Empowerment; Empowerment of Young People; Sustainable Livelihoods; Decent Work and Social Protection; Health; Education; Food Security and Food Sovereignty; Governance and Diversity; Finance for Development; Global Environmental Justice; and Climate Change and Natural Resource Management.

The 2013 CHOGM concluded on November 17th after a week of intensive discussions on global developmental issues and policy settlements.

REMEMBERING FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER, JUSTICE ULRIC CROSS



Pictured: *Justice Ulric Cross*

In October, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission was saddened to learn of the passing of war veteran, legal luminary and diplomat Ulric Cross.

Squadron Leader, Justice Phillip Louis Ulric Cross, DFO DSO remains one of the most exceptional figures in the history of the West Indian Diaspora. Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago, this former judge, philanthropist and war hero is possibly the most decorated West Indian Squadron Leader of World War II. His passing struck a deep chord within the Mission, as Justice Cross was also a former High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago to the United Kingdom from 1990-1993.

As High Commissioner, he is fondly remembered by former staff and nationals as being a man of stature and exceeding warmth. Staff members recall a brilliant man who was a quintessential representative of Trinidad and Tobago, someone who maintained an open door policy and was always concerned for people's welfare. Many nationals have spoken about their affection for a kind, warm person, the epitome of a gentleman, who was always down to earth, good natured and an ardent supporter of his nationals' events.

Justice Cross was a man who genuinely wanted to make a difference in people's lives. This legacy will live on with the numerous charities he supported, including the Heroes Foundation and the Cotton Tree Foundation, the latter of which he co-founded in 1993.

Justice Cross was indeed an exemplar. May his memory serve to motivate us all to go above and beyond as these true heroes did, and to lead lives which will be models of courage and honour for future generations.

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T&T HIGH COMMISSION CELEBRATES EID-UL-ADHA IN LONDON

Above: *H.E. Garvin Nicholas addresses the audience;* ***Below:*** *Zara Halahan shares the tale of the Prophet Ibrahaim*

The Trinidad and Tobago High Commission marked the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha with an evening of prayer and thanksgiving on Saturday 19th October. The room was packed as the High Commission welcomed an unprecedented number of people to its annual Eid celebrations.

Pictured: Zara Halahan

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas was pleased to see such a diverse audience. "How heartening it is to see this room full of Trinidad and Tobago nationals, a greater turnout than we have had for any other Eid celebration in the past", he remarked. "Many of you I know, hail from varied backgrounds and adhere to diverse religious beliefs. Your presence here today is a wonderful illustration of the harmony and brotherhood our nationals share".

The High Commissioner spoke of the Government's commitment to supporting the good work of the Islamic Community, noting the recent announcement that substantial donations would be made to leading Islamic organisations, as well as the hosting of Trinidad and Tobago's first major Islamic conference in August, the first of its kind in the Caribbean.

His Excellency also called on the audience to take heed of the importance of faith and discipline, tenets which are central to the observance of Eid-ul-Adha. "The passion for justice and love for his fellow man exhibited by the devout Muslim are sorely devoid from greater society today," he stated. "As we grapple with burgeoning selfishness, corruption and violence, it is easy to fall into despair and a sense of hopelessness. However, the festival of Eid-ul-Adha must be a reminder to us of our own personal responsibility and potential to do the extraordinary in pursuit of what is right".

The proceedings were led by Trinidad and Tobago nationals living in London. The Opening Prayer was delivered by Imam Rasheed Khan, with his grandson, Adem Zein Ghany

giving the Vote of Appreciation at the end of the evening.

Fourteen-year old talk on the Prophet Ibrahaim, sharing the tale of Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his son to respect the will of Allah, an ultimate act of selflessness which is commemorated on Eid-ul-Adha.

Pictured: Imam Rasheed Khan

The Feature Address was delivered by Mrs. Asela El Morsy. Mrs. El Morsy gave an impassioned reflection on the spirit of Eid-ul-Adha, calling on the audience to look within and question what they could do to improve themselves and their surroundings. She urged the audience to take the values of faith and discipline to heart, and to realise that sacrifice is meaningless unless it is done with dignity and ardent care for one's neighbour.

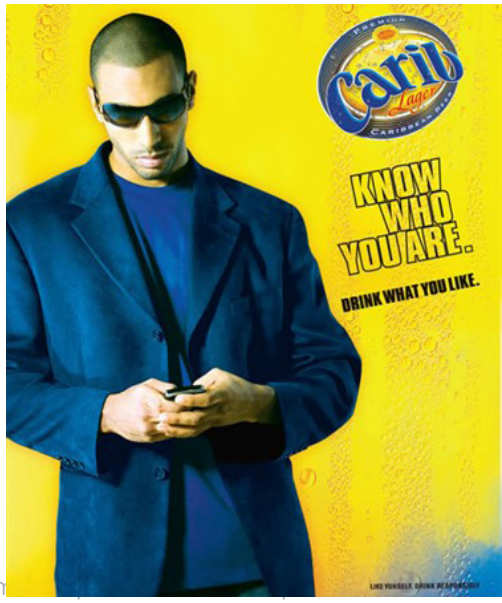
Guests lingered long after the proceedings were over, enjoying a traditional Indo-Trinidadian meal and revelling in the sense of community ever-present at High Commission gatherings. As His Excellency stated, the evening was a prime example of Trinbagonians' ability to embrace each other's beliefs and come together to celebrate festivals which have become central to our culture.

Pictured: Adem Zein Ghany

DECEMBER 2013

Foreign Exchange rates

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING	CASH
Great British Pound	10.4265	10.6501	9.78000
United States Dollar	6..3957	6.4665	6.10000
European Euro	8.4861	8.947	8.17000
Canadian Dollar	5.9159	6.2215	5.67000



T&T HIGH COMMISSIONER HOSTS DIVALI CELEBRATION IN LONDON

Above: *The High Commissioner delivers his welcome address at the Divali celebration*

On 2nd November, a diverse audience of over four hundred (400) Trinidad and Tobago nationals gathered together at the residence of Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas to commemorate the festival of Divali. The celebration took the form of an elaborate Hindu ceremony, featuring traditional thanksgiving rites.

The venue was packed to capacity with nationals eager to celebrate the sacred festival, and to revel in the sense of community ever-present at the High Commission's national events. The High Commissioner expressed his pleasure at the overwhelming turnout, remarking that he was at a loss for words to see the sheer number of nationals coming together to celebrate as one.

In his welcome to the audience, Nicholas urged guests to heed the important lessons of Divali. "Divali, the Festival of Light, harkens to our personal capacity to act as forces of positivity within our own communities," he stated. "This sense of personal responsibility is such an essential element as we seek to mould a society we can be proud of. Too often we citizens forget our own power and feel that we cannot make a difference. Yet one of the most invaluable lessons of Divali is the importance of faith in your ability to be a light in your world, to maintain hope in the promise of a better, brighter day".

Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora were intricately involved in the celebration's proceedings, which were led by Pundita Asha Gosine, MBE, and Shree Krishna Ragbir. The audience sang along to a series of Bhajans and chanted in unison to the Hanuman Chalisa. Pundita Gosine also performed the sacred purifying ritual, the Havan Ceremony, in which the High Commissioner and his wife, Dr. Nicola Alcala, were key participants.

Thanksgiving was also expressed in the form of dance, and the packed audience delighted ▸▸

Above: *Mrs. Omadaye Sawh places the garland on the High Commissioner and his wife; Below: lighting of deyas*

in the mesmerising religious dance performed by Mrs. Rohini Kumar. Shree Ragbir concluded the ceremony with a prayer which appealed to the congregation to emulate the joyous sense of brotherhood displayed by the citizens of Ayodha when they all came together to celebrate the return of Lord Rama and Sita after their fourteen (14) year exile.

The celebration went well into the evening with the congregation enjoying a sumptuous Indo-Trindadian meal. At the end of the night, guests took their leave with many remarking on the poignancy of the ceremony, and expressing their appreciation to the High Commissioner for opening his residence to allow them to share the special festival with their fellow nationals.

Pictured:
1) *The High Commissioner with Lawrence and Jenny Scott;*
2) *A young national performs a bhajan;*
3) *The High Commissioner greets a guest;*
4) *Krishna Ragbir, Pandita Arsha Gosine, High Commissioner, Dr. Alcala and Immigration Attache David Hinkson participate in the Havan ceremony;*
5) *The offerings are given up;*
6) *Classical dancer Rohini Kumar performs a religious dance*

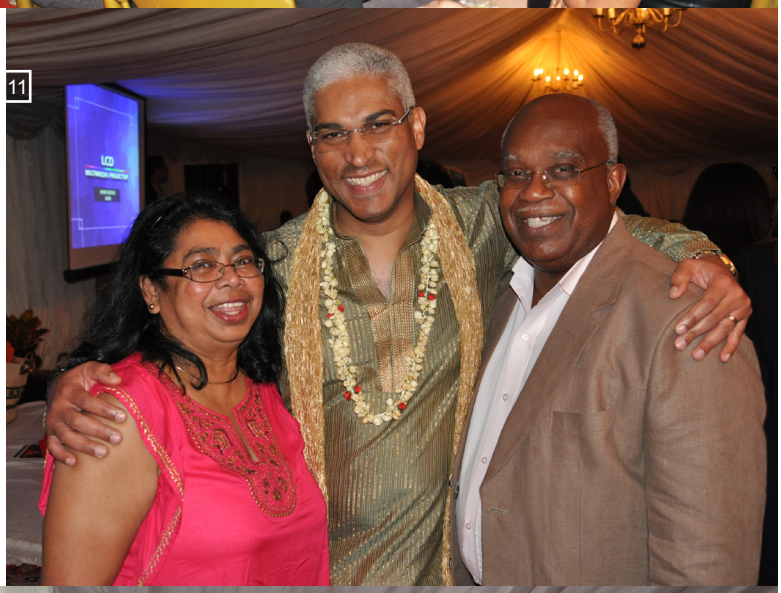
PICTURED:

1) *The High Commissioner with a guest* ***2)****The High Commissioner and Dr. Alcala with family members;* ***3)*** *High Commissioner and Dr. Alcala greet a young guest;* ***4)*** *preparation of the prasad* ***5)*** *students enjoying the tasty meal;* ***6)*** *Krishna Ragbir and family* ***7)*** *The High Commissioner with nationals.*

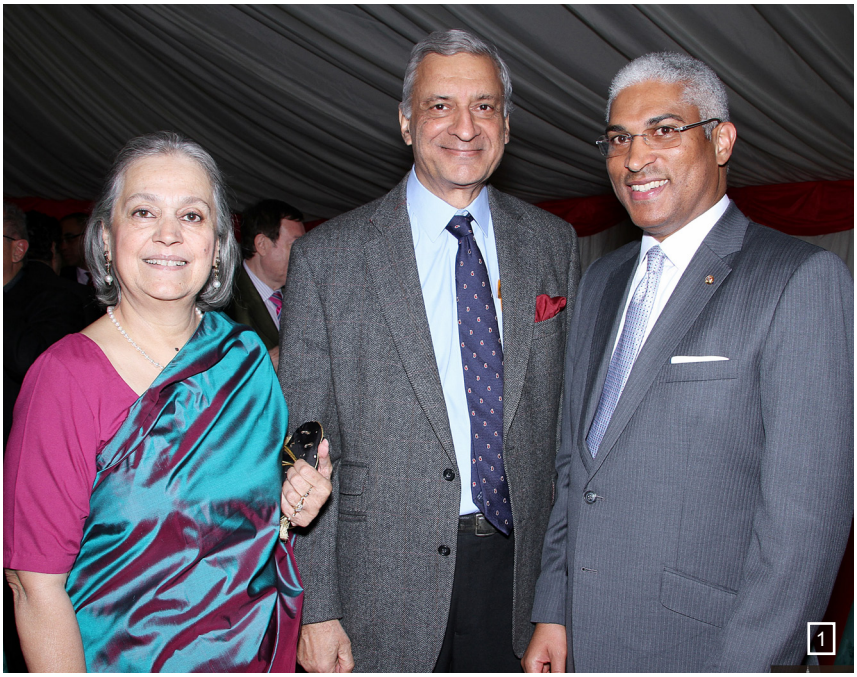
Photos: Lawson Lovell, Brian Quavar

A cross-section of the Diaspora attending the Divali celebrations at the High Commissioner's residence in London, including Miss Trinidad and Tobago UK, Karimah Farrel with Ms. Angela Cox (left)

Photos: Lawson Lovell, Brian Quavar



HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DIPLOMATIC CHRISTMAS RECEPTION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Trinidad and Tobago's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas made a call for nations to make the development of their people a priority, regardless of politics or the whims of individuals.

The High Commissioner made the statement to an audience comprised of various members of the Diplomatic Corps representing every continent, including Secretary General of the Commonwealth, His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma, as well as members of the Diaspora and Business Community when he hosted a Diplomatic Christmas Reception on Saturday 30th November. The Reception was held at the High Commissioner's residence and afforded guests a sample of an authentic Trinbagonian Christmas as he continued his drive towards enhanced cultural diplomacy.

"An integral part of Christmas, like Eid and Divali, is the concept of rebirth and new beginnings. A tradition which is usually accompanied by the practice of reflection, recognition and planning", stated H.E. Nicholas, who used the opportunity to reflect on a successful 3 years, give thanks, and chart the way forward.

H.E. Nicholas spoke of the valuable relations he had built with his Diaspora, Business Community, the Diplomatic Community, and the Government and People of the United Kingdom.

The High Commissioner made note of the key role Trinidad and Tobago had played in the Commonwealth during his tenure, particularly in guiding the implementation of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) recommendations, the development of a Commonwealth Charter that codified the principles outlined in the Port of Spain CHOGM in 2009, and the implementation of a Strategic Plan for moving the Commonwealth forward, in addition to fundamental roles in CMAG and the Commonwealth Foundation.

H.E. Nicholas also recounted some of the numerous programmes and festivals that had been put on by the High Commissioner which promoted Trinidad and Tobago's unique culture, in particular the outstanding Cultural Village which coincided with the celebration of Trinidad and Tobago's 50th anniversary of Independence.

The High Commissioner also reflected on the various initiatives the High Commission pursued to solidify ties with British and European business entities and government bodies, notably the various outreach visits throughout the United Kingdom and accredited States.

H.E. Nicholas noted that, "Nothing of substance can ever be achieved in isolation however." With that in mind, he took the opportunity to recognise the efforts of his staff, both at the High Commission and at the residence for the support and professionalism that had ▶▶

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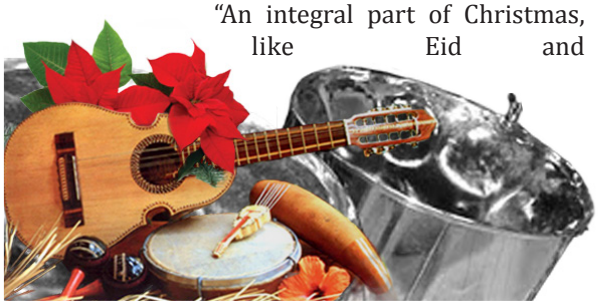


allowed him to perform his duties at the level he had.

H.E. Nicholas thanked the nationals for having been fantastic and indicated that they had been the proverbial "wind beneath his wings".

The High Commissioner thanked his colleagues in the Diplomatic community for having been extremely helpful whenever he had to call upon them for assistance, as well as those on the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth for having been truly outstanding as they overcame the many challenges in moving the Commonwealth forward.

Last but certainly not least, he thanked his family for their support throughout.

The High Commissioner expressed that it was his Christmas wish that nations, whether rich or poor, understand that the resources provided by Mother Nature are meant to be for the good of all.

"Some nations have certainly benefitted more than others but Development should not be dictated by politics or the whims of individuals."

As he closed, the High Commissioner noted that as we approach 2014 and beyond, Poverty Eradication, Literacy, Healthcare, Women's Rights and Climate Change remained pressing concerns. "Nations need to understand that development of people, wherever they may live, should be the priority especially of those nations that can afford it. That, I submit, is the true mark of a civilised world".

"Development, after all, promotes the evolution of the citizen to demand the higher goals of Democracy and Human Rights".

Guests at the reception were greeted by the vocals of world renowned tenor Neil Latchman, Brent Holder, MBE, who led the C.S.I. Steel Band, internationally acclaimed dramatic soprano Anne Fridal and traditional parang music was performed by Robert Cardinez Parang Band. Traditional Trinbagonian Christmas cuisine was served.

Guests thanked the High Commissioner for his service and for bringing Trinidad and Tobago closer to London. The evening capped off an eventful year for the High Commission and was a fitting celebration for H.E. Nicholas' three-year anniversary at the London Mission.

PICTURED: ***1)*** *The High Commissioner with Commonwealth Secretary General, His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma and his wife Mrs. Babli Sharma* ***2)*** *High Commissioner welcomes Mr. Felix James, one of T&T's oldest nationals residing in the UK;* ***3)*** *The High Commissioner delivers his welcome address;* ***4)*** *Classical tenor Neil Latchman serenades Dr. Alcala;* ***5)*** *Dramatic soprano Anne Fridal with the High Commissioner;* ***6)*** *Brent Holder MBE performs the national anthem;* ***7)*** *Neil Latchman performs for the crowd*

1) *Los Paranderos de Londres perform;* ***2)*** *The High Commissioner and Dr. Alacala greet guests;* ***3)*** *Mr. David Kalloo and wife;* ***4)*** *High Commission staff: Ms. Nickesha Smith; Mrs. Michelle Charles; Ms. Rasheeda Morton, Mrs. Reshma Bissoon-Deokie;* ***5)*** *The High Commissioner with a young national;* ***6)*** *Guests enjoy the festivities;* ***7)*** *Reverend Stephens with Lyn Jones;* ***8)*** *Immigration Attaché David Hinkson with Mrs. Reesa Moonilal-Singh;* ***9)*** *Ms. Sandra Singh and friend;* ***10)*** *Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips, Master of Ceremonies for the night;* ***11)*** *Mr. Oliver Martin, Ms. Joni Bruce, Mr. Omari Murray and Mr. Tyrone Williams smile for the camera.* ***Photos:*** *Lawson Lovell, Brian Quaver*

__1)__ Diplomatic guests smile for the camera; __2)__ Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Betancourt MBE chat with the High Commissioner; __3)__ The High Commissioner with Miss Carivog Model International Zania Linton; __4)__ Sylvia Maharaj, OBE and friend; __5)__ The High Commissioner and Dr. Alcala with diplomatic guests; __6)__ Diplomatic guests enjoy the festive atmosphere; __7)__ A group of lovely nationals gather for the camera; __8)__ Mr. Fanklyn Walters, Western Union, with guests; __9)__ The High Commissioner jokes with nationals; __10)__ Mrs. Beverley Awonaya with Mrs. Darcel and Mr. James Walker; __11)__ Mr. Geoff Lowe with his wife and friend; __12)__ The High Commissioner with Mr. Suresh Rambaran and guest.

Photos: Lawson Lovell, Brian Quaver

__1)__ The High Commissioner and Dr. Nicola Alcala with Neil Latchman and family; __2)__ Ancil Barclay and friends __3)__ Fiona Sandy, Grenada High Commission, with Nickesha Smith __4)__ Denis St. Bernard and guests __5)__ guests dance the night away __6)__ A great-looking group smiles for the camera __7)__ Councillor Judy Best, Lambeth Council; __8)__ DJ Andrew Rajpaulsingh with Ray Baldeo; __9)__ The High Commissioner engages with guests

***Photos:** Lawson Lovell, Brian Quaver*

T&T HIGH COMMISSION'S STUDENTS' CHRISTMAS RECEPTION

The Mission was abuzz with energy and laughter on Friday 6th December when the High Commission hosted its annual Students' Christmas Reception.

As he welcomed students, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas emphasised their vital role in the development of Trinidad and Tobago.

"The responsibility of the future of our nation is on your shoulders," he declared. "It is imperative that you give back to your country and transform it into a place your children will be proud of".

The High Commissioner spent the rest of his time interacting with all of the students, reiterating the Mission's commitment to providing support during their time away from home.

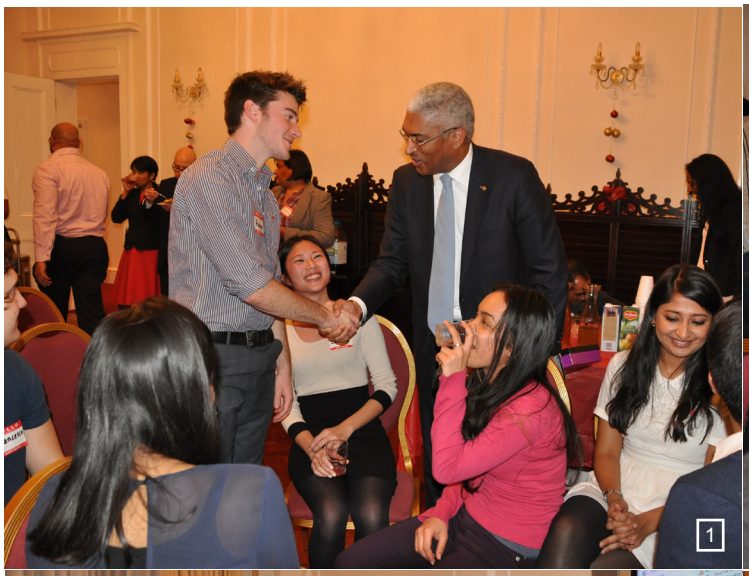
The students enjoyed a traditional Trinbagonian Christmas meal, including pastelles, ham, rice and pigeon peas with sorrel and mauby.

Ms. Keisha Rochford-Hawkins, Second Secretary Consular and Student Affairs, led the guests in a lively evening of activities, such as a Know Your Country triva competition and a karaoke session. The competitive nature of the students was clear as they excitedly vied for prizes which included hampers of Trinbagonian snacks such as Crix crackers and CheeZees.

The Consular and Student Affairs team, including Mrs. Romaine Maharaj and Mrs. Reesa Moonilal-Singh, ensured the students experienced the authentic spirit of Trinbagonian Christmas.

Students mingled late into the night, and thanked the TTHC staff for giving them a great dose of home.

__1)__ The High Commissioner greets guests; __2)__ H.E. Nicholas shares an anecdote with a group ; __3)__ Ms. Rochford-Hawkins congratulates a student and presents him with a hamper; __4)__ The High Commissioner chats with a group



HIGH COMMISSIONER TALKS ENERGY, COLLABORATION WITH NORWAY

Pictured: *Mr Rolf Holmen, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in Norway; His Excellency Garvin Nicholas; Jan Duerloo, Head of Production, Yara Belgium SA/NV and Alexey Lisin, Strategy & BD/Legal, Yara International ASA.*

In his capacity as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to four of the Nordic countries, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas conducted an Official Visit to the region, where he solidified ties with high profile leaders in Energy and Trade.

On October 9th, His Excellency met with representatives from the Ministry of Energy, including Mr. Peter Føllesdal Brown, Deputy Director and Jorunn Anne Salthella, Assistant Director General. The group discussed Norway's approach to Renewable Energy. During this meeting, officials presented on mechanisms implemented to manage and effectively control the energy usage in Norway. 99% of Norway's energy consumption is in Electricity which is generated mainly by Hydropower. Norway is the 7th largest exporter of Oil and 3rd largest exporter of gas, and the Ambassador indicated that future collaboration between Norway and Trinidad and Tobago on Renewable Energy could reap significant benefits.

Ambassador Nicholas continued to the Oslo Chamber of Commerce where he met with Mr. Lars-Kåre Legernes, Managing Director. The Oslo Chamber provides an Expat service to assist in the orientation of foreign nationals working with Norwegian companies, and Legernes stated that Norway was in need of Engineering and Nursing professionals; another area of possible collaboration between Norway and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ambassador also liaised with Ms Patricia Svendsen who is currently involved in a fish-farming project in Trinidad. Ms Svendsen expressed her eagerness to explore further opportunities for investment in Trinidad and Tobago primarily within the tourist sector, remarking on the significant potential within this sector. Ambassador Nicholas reiterated Ms Svendsen's sentiments regarding the tourism investment opportunities and invited her to network with the Embassy to continue the dialogue. Ambassador Nicholas further expanded on the potential for collaboration between Trinidad and Tobago and Norway particularly in the areas of Oil & Gas Services

and companies interested in exporting to Latin America and the Caribbean.

His Excellency paid a visit to Innovation Norway where he met with Mr Sverre Johan Lindtvedt, Director, Division Abroad. Following the discussions it was determined that three of the major areas for collaboration and possible investment would be the Tourism sector, Fish-farming, particularly off-shore and LNG; Norwegians possess cutting-edge technology for deepwater environments whilst Trinidad and Tobago has the technical and engineering expertise.

Ambassador Nicholas paid a courtesy call on Yara International, a company which has had a long-standing relationship with Trinidad and Tobago. Productive discussions ensued with Mr Alexey Lisin, Strategy & Business Development/Legal and Mr Jan Duerloo, Head of Production. A brief review of Yara's investment in Trinidad and Tobago was provided and an interest in exploring potential downstream opportunities expressed.

Ambassador Nicholas expressed his immense satisfaction with the productive visit, which yielded clear opportunities for collaboration and Investment within the areas of Tourism, Information Communications Technology (ICT) development, Fish-farming and downstream Energy and Energy services.

AMBASSADOR NICHOLAS' VISIT TO SWEDEN OPENS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

On October 10th, Ambassador Nicholas' programme began with a tour of the Ericsson Studio where His Excellency was treated to an impressive display of cutting-edge smart technology from the application to the control of arable farming to smart homes and aesthetic and energy efficient cell-sites. A meeting with Mr. Ulf Pehrsson, Vice President, Government & Industry Relations and Mr Ulrik Lindqvist, Sales Director, Latin America followed. Ericsson has significant ties to Trinidad and Tobago, from the provision of mobile phones, to 4G technology. Mr. Pehrsson identified some areas of opportunity which included the liberalisation of new mobile applications such as e-Gov and Mobile Money; permit entry of Mobile Virtual Network Operator services to boost competition and allow refarming of the spectrum bands to enable Mobile Broadband growth. As a result of these discussions, His Excellency was invited to meet with the Ericsson team in Trinidad to review further areas for collaboration.

Pictured: H.E. Garvin Nicholas, Nina Hornewall, Senior Vice President, Kuoni Nordic AB; Takis Filippopoulos, Senior Vice President Production, Kuoni Travel Ltd.; Ambassador Claes Hammar, Ambassador of Sweden, The Caribbean

His Excellency then met with Helena Barrantes Carlsson, Project Manager, Business Sweden. Many of Sweden's major industries align with Trinidad and Tobago's development focus, such as Information Communications Technology, Healthcare & Life Sciences, Creative Industries, Safety & Security, Industrial equipment, Energy & Environmental Technology, Transport Systems and Food. Ambassador Nicholas and Ms. Carlsson discussed doing business between Trinidad and Tobago and Sweden and the benefits to be derived in setting-up operations in Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Nicholas also met with Ambassador Claes Hammar, Ambassador for the Caribbean resident in Sweden and Mr Jonas Lovén, Director of the Americas Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was an invaluable opportunity for discussion and sharing of perspectives between

Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago, one the Ambassador was confident will lead to enhanced understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

Ambassador Nicholas' tour of the Nordic region culminated in a meeting with Ms Nina Hornewall, Country Manager, Sweden and Mr Takis Filippopoulos, Commercial Director of Apollo. The Apollo representatives expressed great anticipation for the commencement of a two-week charter service to Tobago in December 2013. Since launching the service, sales have been encouraging. Ambassador Nicholas vowed to liaise directly with stakeholders in Tobago to impress upon them the importance of consistent service delivery to the success of this service.

***Pictured**: The High Commissioner makes his mark at the Ericsson headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden*

The Ambassador ended his tour of the Nordic region with a renewed confidence in a strengthened relationship between the region and Trinidad and Tobago. The eagerness of leaders of enterprise to engage in talks about opportunities for collaboration and investment with Trinidad and Tobago underscored the Ambassador's sentiment that direct dialogue and promotion of our interests is imperative to opening the door to increased Foreign Investment.

HIGH COMMISSIONER SPARKS INTEREST FROM MAJOR NORDIC INVESTORS FOR T&T BUSINESS

On October 8th, Ambassador Nicholas attended a meeting with Mr Esa Ahonen, Finance Director of Aalto University in Norway. Ambassador Nicholas led discussions on Trinidad and Tobago's development of its Technology Park and available opportunities for knowledge sharing and business development.

***Pictured:** Mr Jukka Ant-Wuorinen, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in Finland; His Excellency Garvin Nicholas; Aleksei Novitsky, Vice President of Energy and Trade, Gasum Oy Ltd.*

In Finland, His Excellency also paid a Courtesy Call on the Ambassador with responsibility for Latin America and the Caribbean, His Excellency Kim Luotonen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The topics of discussion were Trinidad and Tobago's approach to the Renewable Energy sector, the Diversification of the Economic Climate, the outstanding Schengen Visa Waiver, Climate Change matters, Candidatures for support, and Tourism. The Ambassadors also discussed Trinidad and Tobago's bid to host the Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Ambassador Nicholas was then hosted to lunch at the Otaniemi Technology, Innovation and Business Hub by Mr Ari Huczkowski, CEO. Otaniemi features a mix of world-class research organizations, academic institutions and over 800 companies from start-ups to multinational corporations, including the global headquarters for Nokia, Kone, Tekla and Rovio's Angry Birds. His Excellency expressed an interest in partnering with Otaniemi towards the development of the Technology Park in Trinidad. Mr Huczkowski advised that he would be happy to share his knowledge and expertise, and would also undertake to facilitate introductions to the relevant Consulting companies.

A meeting with the Finnish Central Chamber of Commerce provided a platform for the Ambassador to offer the audience a glimpse of the unique destination that is Trinidad and Tobago, as well as to advise on specific opportunities for investment. Ambassador Nicholas informed those present of the rich heritage that has contributed to the country's cultural diversity and creativity as evidenced by the successful export product, the Trinidad Carnival. His Excellency stated that there were many incentives in effect to attract new investors and Finnish companies would also be able to take advantage of the additional benefits to be derived from the EPA. The question of implementing a taxation agreement between Finland and Trinidad and Tobago was raised, with Ambassador Nicholas vowing to pursue a resolution of the matter.

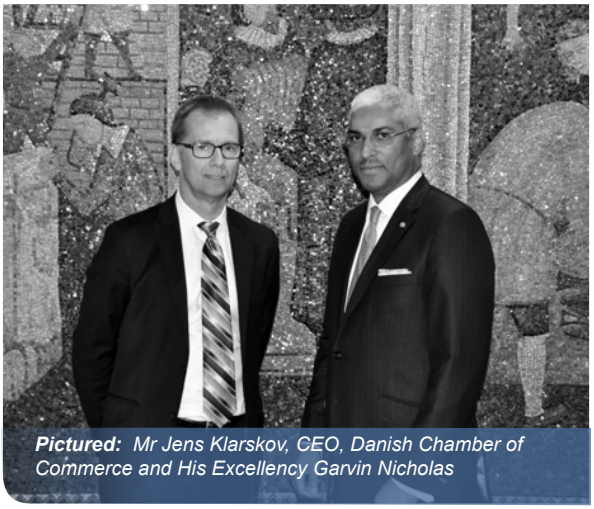
Ambassador Nicholas met with Mr. Aleksei Novitsky of Gasum Oy Ltd. Novitsky expressed his company's interest in initiating discussions with the relevant authorities in Trinidad and Tobago regarding possibility of supply of LNG commencing 2018. Ambassador Nicholas advised that he would discuss the matter with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs.

A clear theme emerged from this visit: there is a real opportunity for increased collaboration and knowledge sharing between Finland and Trinidad and Tobago. Ambassador Nicholas used the occasion to review potential areas of new investment in the fields of tourism, including eco, sport and medical tourism, Information Communications Technology, Renewable Energy and Manufacturing, eliciting a keen interest in Trinidad and Tobago as a sound choice for long-term investment.

AMBASSADOR NICHOLAS SPURS TRADE DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN T&T AND DENMARK

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas continued his Scandinavian tour with an official visit to Denmark, where he met with heads of infrastructure to discuss the latest advances in Renewables technology, Information Communications Technology (ICT) applications and opportunities for development of trade between Denmark and Trinidad and Tobago.

On October 9th, Ambassador Nicholas' programme commenced with a meeting at the Danish Chamber of Commerce. Mr Jens Klarskov, CEO and Mr Kristoffer Klebak, Head of International Affairs engaged with the Ambassador on the similarities in the socio-economic climate between Trinidad and Tobago and Denmark. His Excellency provided an overview of Trinidad and Tobago's investment opportunities highlighting Tourism,



Pictured: *Mr Jens Klarskov, CEO, Danish Chamber of Commerce and His Excellency Garvin Nicholas*

particularly business and eco-tourism and ICT. It was agreed that the Chamber of Commerce would begin disseminating information on behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Embassy to its membership.

Ambassador Nicholas then met with Mr Bo Bjørke, Senior Public Affairs Adviser of A.P. Moller Maersk, a global shipping and energy conglomerate. Of particular interest to the Ambassador was the extent of Maersk's deep water Oil & Gas services, which boasts equipment capable of drilling down to four (4) kilometers. The Ambassador was also struck by Maekser's bunkering business as well as its port development company, APM Terminals, which designs, owns and operates terminals. Mr Bjørke indicated that both the deep water and bunkering initiatives may provide opportunities for collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago in the long-term. Ambassador Nicholas was also keen to further discuss port development opportunities with the company.

His Excellency was invited to a meeting at Haldor Topsøe, a catalysis company which also develops process technology for petroleum refining, ammonia production, methanol production, and other industries. The Ambassador was hosted by Mr Bjerne Clausen, CEO, Mr Jørgen Gøl, Group Vice President and Mr Mads Feddersen, Marketing Manager. Mr Clausen indicated that the company was committed to Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region and in this regard was interested in expanding its operations. Their focus is on diversification, possibly through Joint Venture partnerships, into high quality value added Liquid Natural Gas products. Ambassador Nicholas confirmed that such expansion would be welcomed. It was agreed that the Ambassador would liaise with the Trinidad and Tobago Government and the Private sector to further collaborative ventures with Haldor Topsøe.

Pictured: *Mr Mats Guldbrand, Experience Consultant, Ericsson Studio; Mr Ulf Pehrsson, Vice President, Government & Industry Relations (in the background); H.E. Garvin Nicholas*

Prior to meeting with the Confederation of Danish Industries, the Ambassador visited the House of Green. Helle Momsen, Project Manager, facilitated an interactive tour which offered the delegation the opportunity to experience sustainable solutions in the field of energy, climate adaptation and environment.

Ambassador Nicholas also met with the Confederation of Danish Industries. Discussions with Mr Peter Thagesen, Director International Market Policy, Mr Poul Meldgaard, Director in Danish Seafood Association and Mr Christian Hannibal, Chief Consultant at DI ITEK revealed that there were prime opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago to benefit from Denmark's expertise in the areas of Aquaculture, Fish Processing and ICT.

His Excellency's visit to Denmark, like his prior visits to Finland and Norway, elicited invaluable opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago to enhance collaboration, knowledge-sharing and increased bi-lateral trade. The investment opportunities fostered by Ambassador Nicholas with these Scandinavian powerhouses in the areas of ICT, Tourism, Food production and processing, and Renewables technology represent a dynamic change in Trinidad and Tobago's trade and investment landscape, as the country seeks to expand its knowledge base and tap into promising new global partnerships.

Pictured: *Jorunn Anne Salthella, Assistant Director General; Member of Staff of Ministry of Petroleum and Energy; Mr. Peter Føllesdal Brown, Deputy Director, Ministry of Petroleum and Energy; His Excellency Garvin Nicholas*

T&T HIGH COMMISSION BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN T&T

KAREN THOMAS
TRADE & BUSINESS FACILITATOR

The Trinidad and Tobago High Commission broke new ground in November 2013 by facilitating access to a key Conference on Business Opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago being held by the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce at their offices in Westmoorings, Trinidad. This was made possible through the provision of video-conferencing facilities by the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) which allowed those with an interest in investing in the twin-island republic real-time participation in the conference.

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce hosted the "Business Opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago – BizOppsTT" Conference on November 27-28 at their Leon Agostini Conference Hall in Westmoorings. Having long held a mutually beneficial relationship with the Chamber, the High Commission capitalised on the opportunity to arrange for remote access to this two day Conference where attendees learnt about the tendering and prequalification processes, MSME and contract opportunities in some of our nation's largest State Enterprises and Ministries.

Video conferencing of the 'Business Opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago Conference 2013' (BizOppTT) allowed representatives from major State Enterprises like the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) and the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), as well as Ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development and the Ministry of Public Administration, to share information on current and future contract opportunities with a foreign-based audience.

Pictured: *(clockwise) Mrs. Karen Thomas, Trade & Business Facilitator, Mr. Bobby Syed, Mrs. Candice Latchman, Claudia Cupid, Mr. Jim Mungal and Mr. Denis St Bernard, Director of Operations at the Caribbean Enterprise Network*

The Honourable Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan, Minister of Public Administration and Senator the Honourable Larry Howai, Minister of Finance and the Economy, amongst others, presented on current and upcoming business opportunities. Representatives from State Agencies shared information on the required goods and services, tendering and bidding processes, prequalification criteria, payment processes, MSME opportunities and contractor challenges. Special presentations included success stories, best practices in tendering and product quality guidelines. Participants were also given the opportunity to engage with the Ministries and State agencies one-on-one during question and answer sessions held after each presentation.

At the close of the Conference, Mr. Denis St Bernard, Director of Operations at the Caribbean Enterprise Network, commented that video conferencing of this event was a 'creative initiative whose time had come'. He pointed out that 'it is clear that we need more of this if we are to expose Trinidad and Tobago to the global market'; it is important that we utilise the 'technology to leverage' our efforts and 'adopt a more global perspective' when planning trade and business initiatives. Mohanlal James Mungal, noted member of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora in London, remarked that whilst 'more sophistication in the media' along with greater participation by Ministries would have been preferred, he benefitted immeasurably from the presentation given by Mr Jim Leung Chee, Head of Purchasing and Supply at TSTT.

The High Commission hopes to partner with stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago to allow remote access to such Conferences in future as we seek to attract foreign based investors and business interests to partner with local enterprises and government agencies.

T&T HIGH COMMISSION PARTICIPATES IN EXPORTT'S EDF 2013

KAREN THOMAS
TRADE & BUSINESS FACILITATOR

On October 29th 2013, exporTT Ltd in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment and Eximbank hosted its inaugural Export Development Forum at the Hyatt Regency, Trinidad. Mrs Karen Thomas, Trade and Business Facilitator at the High Commission for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the United Kingdom, was invited to participate as a member of the panel for Plenary Session Two: Market Insights on Day 1 of the Forum and Plenary Session Four: Harnessing The Diaspora for Export Growth on Day 2. Mrs Thomas delivered presentations on 'Exporting to Europe' and 'Engaging the Diaspora' respectively. As an introduction to her second presentation Mrs Thomas compiled a seven minute video of Diaspora members from the United Kingdom expressing their opinions on how the Diaspora may support the home country's export thrust.

***Pictured:** (L-R) exporTT Manager - Mr. Dhanraj Harrypersad & presenters Dr. Michele Reis, Ms. Arlene Graham and Mrs. Karen Bipat-Thomas at the Export Development Forum in the Hyatt Regency, Trinidad.*

The two-day forum which was held under the theme 'Export Growth: Maximising Trinidad and Tobago's Potential' will be an annual event to promote dialogue on major issues, trends and opportunities in the export environment. The forum is intended to provide an opportunity for participants to interact with experts on topics such as export growth and diversification, overcoming non-tariff barriers and also serve as a platform for the sharing of best practices and successful export strategies.

K.C. CONFECTIONERY MINTS NOW IN TESCO STORES

K.C. Confectionery is the largest Manufacturer of Confectionery and Gum in the Caribbean, with 70% of our production being exported.

K.C. Confectionery Limited has been intermittently in the UK Market for more than twenty (20) years. K.C. Confectionery Limited's Ginger Mint and Dinner Mint can now be purchased from 75 Tesco Stores which are supplied by our Distributor Wanis Limited, Golden House, Golden Business Park, Orient Way, Leyton, London, UK E10 7FE. This Company also services the Ethnic Food Stores.

Over the years, the Trinidad & Tobago High Commission has been of immense assistance in our efforts to market our products in the United Kingdom. Their assistance has been invaluable in receiving response and feedback from prospective Distributors and follow-up with statutory Authorities.

We must express our appreciation for the assistance given to us now and through the years. We had indicated at a Seminar hosted by the High Commission a few years ago that the High Commission offers and can offer valuable assistance to the Trinidad & Tobago Exporters. The Trade & Business Division has been really aggressive in marketing Trinidad & Tobago."

HOME AGAIN PREMIERE DAZZLES LONDON

On October 30th, a British audience was treated to the lavish UK premiere of Home Again at the British Museum. The film depicts the struggle of three Jamaicans who are deported from the U.S., Canada, and England and must make their way in an unfamiliar land. Home Again was shot on location in Trinidad and Tobago and was executive produced by Lisa Wickham, one of the leading figures in Trinidad and Tobago's media industry. The star of the movie, international film actress Tatyana Ali, is also of Trinbagonian descent.

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas delivered an address at the premiere, congratulating the actors, director, producer and film crew on bringing the Caribbean story to life in such compelling fashion. H.E. Nicholas noted the development of Trinidad and Tobago's burgeoning film industry. "Due to the ardent support of our Government and private sector, Trinidad and Tobago's film industry is blossoming," he remarked. "This was recently evidenced by the significant number of locally crafted films featured at London's 5th annual Caribbean Film Corner. Films such as Between Friends, Jab in the Dark, Doubles with Slight Pepper, Captain T&T and The Cool Boys showcased the talent and unique experiences of Trinbagonians amidst the striking backdrops of our islands".

Pictured: *H.E. Garvin Nicholas and his wife Dr. Nicola Alcala with star Tatyana Ali*

The High Commissioner was also in high praise of Executive Producer Lisa Wickham, commending her pioneering work in propelling Trinidad and Tobago's film and television industry to international standards.

Ms. Wickham was delighted by the favourable reviews which the film garnered and thanked the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission for its support, stating, "I am certainly proud to be a Trini tonight!"

Pictured: *L to R Writer Jennifer Holness, ActressTatyana Ali, Director Sudz Sutherland, Actress CCH Pounder, Lisa Wickham*

Home Again | Official Website:
www.homeagainfilm.com

Official Trailer
www.youtube.com/homeagainfilm
http://vimeo.com/62021892

Facebook
www.facebook.com/HomeAgainFilm

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO WOWS AT WORLD TRAVEL MARKET, LONDON

Pictured: *(L-R) Mr. Darren Ganga, Sports Ambassador and Mrs. Carol Anne Birchwood-James, members of the TDC Board of Directors, Mrs. Juliana Johan-Boodram, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips, Tourism Attaché and Mr. Brian Lara, Tourism Ambassador.*

The Trinidad and Tobago exhibition at this year's World Travel Market (WTM) was a clear favourite, eliciting swarms of diverse visitors. The recently concluded WTM, which ran from 4th – 7th November, was held at the ExCel Centre in London and featured exhibitions from over 4,900 tourism stakeholders representing 184 countries. One of the premier tourism shows in the world, WTM attracts thousands of global travel industry insiders, generating millions in business deals for stakeholders.

Amidst the plethora of dazzling displays, the Trinidad and Tobago exhibition easily stood out with its bright, open and interactive layout and the buzz of anticipation from the scores of visitors. A long line snaked around the corner as visitors waited to get their photograph taken with a Carnival masquerader against a digital backdrop of beautiful Pigeon Point beach in Tobago. Visitors were also delighted by the samples of delectable local rum and chocolate, with many coming back for more. However, of all the national products which sparked the excitement of the crowd, none were more popular than Trinidad and Tobago sportsmen and global ambassadors Brian Lara and Dwight Yorke.

Lara emphasised the personal responsibility he feels to utilise his fame to promote Trinidad and Tobago on the world stage, "I have a fierce passion for Trinidad and Tobago, and I try my best to expose our country to as many people as possible," he stated. "As a people, we don't even know our great value. Our strength with regard to tourism is experiential – we have the most interesting, affable mix of people I have ever encountered, and that warmth and rich culture is what should be promoted to ensure Trinidad and Tobago is highlighted on the world map. However, before this is achieved we must undertake the necessary research and focus on improving our national product".

Pictured: *Assemblyman Tracy Davidson-Celestine, Secretary of Tourism and Transportation, THA meets with various tourism stakeholders.*

Fellow international cricketer and board member of the Tourism Development Company, Darren Ganga echoed Lara's ardent sentiments. "I am especially excited about the growth of Sports Tourism. The world is changing and Trinidad and Tobago has become more attuned to the importance of focusing on our diverse tourism product, but we must ensure that we develop the requisite infrastructure," he remarked. "To develop our tourism industry it is imperative that all various sectors – sports, fashion, business and Government – collaborate so that there can be continuity and cohesion in our specialist offerings to the world".

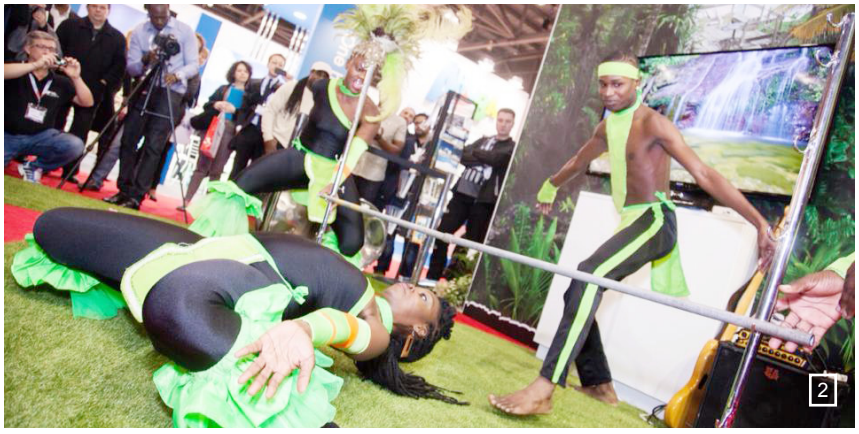
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Mrs. Juliana Johan-Boodram oversaw the proceedings at the exhibition and was joined by several other key Trinidad and Tobago tourism stakeholders, including Secretary of Tourism and Transportation in the Tobago House of Assembly, Ms. Tracy Davidson- Celestine, as well as Tourism Attaché at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London, Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips.

Johan-Boodram noted how important tourism conferences such as WTM are to ▶▶

promoting Trinidad and Tobago and advancing the local tourism industry. "This is where we generate interest in Trinidad and Tobago from the decision-makers in the global tourism industry. It is important that Trinidad and Tobago is visible at these major conferences and they also enable us to discuss and lobby for issues significant to our development," she stated. "Our Ministry is striving to enhance local tourism via several initiatives, most recently the campaign launched in August, 'Our Tourism, it's about ALL of Us', which aims to cement the importance of knowing our country and appreciating the value of tourism among nationals".

Johan-Boodram also called for more aggressive measures to be taken against the UK Government's refusal to rebrand the Caribbean in its Air Passenger Duty taxation scheme, a position which has been also been championed by Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner to the UK, Garvin Nicholas.

Tourism Attaché, Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips expressed her satisfaction with the success of this year's exhibit. "Our various travel agencies, tour operators, hoteliers and other tourism stakeholders have made important connections as a result of the WTM, and have been able to glean great inspiration for creative ideas on how to enhance the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago", she said. "We look forward to building on this renewed interest in Trinidad and Tobago and working further with associates at home and here in the United Kingdom".



Pictured: *1) Assemblyman Tracy Davidson-Celestine, Secretary of Tourism and Transportation, THA with Mr. John Arnold, Events Coordinator Division of Tourism & Transportation, THA;* ***2)*** *Limbo dancers performing at the Trinidad & Tobago booth at WTM 2013 ,* ***3)*** *Dwight Yorke autographs a football for a visitor at the booth.* ***4)*** *Communications Officer Ms. Bianca Beddoe with Carnival masquerader Ms. Jennice Price,* ***5)*** *Two visitors get their photograph taken with a Carnival masquerader against a digital backdrop of Tobago scenery.*

T&T HIGH COMMISSION SHINES AT COMMONWEALTH FAIR

On Saturday 9th November, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission to the United Kingdom participated in the 2013 Commonwealth Countries League Fair, raising £1,000 for the Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund. For the Commonwealth Diaspora, the Fair is one of the most highly anticipated events of the year. The event is organised annually with the help of Commonwealth High Commissioners in the United Kingdom. It is a spectacular occasion which showcases the unique crafts, cultures and culinary diversity of the Commonwealth.

The staff members of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission were decked out in the national colours, with red, white and black aprons, head ties and chef's hats. Patrons to the Trinidad and Tobago stall were wowed by the display, which included stacks of iconic locally manufactured products, such as Angostura rum, Crix, KC candies, Carib beer and many others. The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association was contacted by the High Commission, and members were invited to donate products to the Commonwealth Fair. As a result, patrons were able to enjoy coco tea balls from Grande Agro Tourism Ltd, preserved fruit and condiments from Paula's Preserves, confectionery from KC Confectionery, as well as Crix crackers and sweets from Bermudez donated by Dees Caribbean Imports. The Tobago House of Assembly also donated products from Forros' Home Made Delicacies.

Visitors converged on the stall, clamouring to buy delectable local dishes, including roti, pelau, ▸▸

Pictured: 1) *Mr. David Hinkson, Immigration Attaché, Beverley Awonaya, Donna Phillip-Forde, Office Manager, Reshma Bissoon-Deokie, Head of Chancery - First Secretary, Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips, Tourism Attaché, Rasheeda Morton, Reesa Moonilal-Singh,Claudia Cupid and Gillian Sealy;* **2)** *Candice Latchman selling someTobago cocoa packs,* **3)** *Lawson Lovell takes orders from patrons for the hot foods on sale;* **4)** *Mr. David Hinkson, Immigration Attaché and Rasheeda Morton selling rum punch to a patron.*

okra rice and salt fish. Another huge attraction was the rum punch stand, which had a steady throng of patrons, many of whom kept returning for more.

Pictured: *His Excellency Anthony Carmona greets a national at the Fair.*

Staff members and visitors alike were thrilled to receive a surprise visit from President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Anthony Carmona. The President, who was transiting through London, took the opportunity to visit the Trinidad and Tobago team at the Commonwealth Fair and commended the staff on their exceptional display.

Tourism Attaché, Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips was delighted by the massive turnout and interest generated in Trinidad and Tobago. "I am very pleased that we were able to raise such a sizable amount for the Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund," she remarked. "Our display was a great representation of Trinidad and Tobago, and its immense popularity is evidence of the desirability and value of our national products".

LONDON STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

On Friday 15th November, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London was invited to host a Trinidad and Tobago Day at the Eaton House, The Vale primary-level School in Kensington, London.

Tourism Attaché Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips led the event with the support of Public Affairs Officer, Mrs. Beverley Awonaya. Ms. Phillips organised the Trinidad and Tobago Day at the behest of Principal Robin Greenwood and Ms. Rafeda Rojan, the mother of its only Trinidad and Tobago pupil, Mikhail Choo Ying. Mikhail is the son of the High Commission's Immigration Attaché, Mr. Marlon Choo Ying.

In such a multi-cultural and diverse school environment, the Trinidad and Tobago Day presented an invaluable opportunity to introduce and promote Trinidad and Tobago to an attentive and engaged young audience.

The school is comprised of 78 students ranging from age 3 to 9 years. The students were divided into 4 groups and taken through a series of activities where they learned fun facts about Trinidad and Tobago, and the culture and history of the twin-islands. The students were also delighted to hear stories of classic Tobago tales. The students also learned about two of Trinidad and Tobago's most lauded festivals, the Buccoo Goat Race Festival and the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival.

Grade 3 students (aged 7-9) learned about the various types of corals and fishes found in the Buccoo Reef in Tobago, as well as the process of costume making. They created a Reef-themed Carnival band and were taught a dance routine that was performed in perfect unison for their younger school mates and teachers.

At the end of the Trinidad and Tobago Day students were able to:

1. Locate Trinidad and Tobago on the map
2. Play games played by children in Trinidad and Tobago
3. Talk about the Goat Race Festival in Tobago and the Carnival Festival in Trinidad
4. Design and build a simple Carnival costume
5. Dance in coordinated steps to soca music while dressed as Carnival masquerades

Pictured: *Ms. Rojan with Tourism Attaché Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips, Mikhail Choo Ying and Principal Greenwood*

Teachers were provided with information packs on the Steel Pan together with other tourism material including flags and maps. Parents were invited later in the evening to attend a small reception where they enjoyed rum punch and local cuisine including roti and pholourie prepared by Ms. Rojan.

DIASPORA WRITERS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT T&T HIGH COMMISSION

Pictured: *The High Commissioner addresses the audience at Literary Evening.*

On Monday 14th October, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London celebrated Trinidad and Tobago's rich literary heritage with a book launch and reception featuring three highly acclaimed national writers. This year's winner of the OCM BOCAS Prize for Caribbean Literature, Monique Roffey, was joined by Amanda Smyth and Roger Robinson as they read excerpts from their respective works and discussed various issues surrounding Diaspora writers.

The event was hosted by His Excellency Garvin Nicholas, who emphasised Trinidad and Tobago's rich literary tradition. "In spite of our small size, Trinidad and Tobago has given birth to an extraordinary wealth of talented writers," Nicholas stated. "This is certainly testament to the high calibre of our education system. Today, Trinidad and Tobago's citizens enjoy universal education, from the primary straight up to the tertiary level".

The reception commenced with readings from each author. Writer and Poet Roger Robinson recited excerpts from his works Butterfly Hotel, Kidnap, The Irishman and Tobago Fruits, all of which explored questions of immigration, home and displacement. In Butterfly Hotel, Robinson painted a stark picture of the longing of the immigrant for the home country left behind.

Monique Roffey shared a reading from her new book Archipelago, echoing Robinson's sentiment that the immigrant writer often feels a big split, never being sure of where their home is truly situated. In Archipelago, she explored issues of self discovery and discovery of country and culture from afar as her protagonist journeyed away from Trinidad to the Galapagos Islands. According to Roffey, one of her aims in writing the book was to inspire interest in the importance of maintaining the Caribbean's unique ecological system.

Irish-Trinidadian writer Amanda Smyth read a chapter of her new book A Kind of Eden, a work which showcased the compelling beauty of Trinidad and Tobago and contrasted it with the protagonist's need to escape life in England. For Smyth, it was important to highlight the striking scenery of the islands from the tourist's perspective while revealing the reality of the people residing there.

The High Commissioner hailed the importance of these and other modern writers to the development of a strong national identity. "In this era of widespread Americanisation, I believe the work of Trinidad and Tobago's modern writers are all the more significant," he remarked. "Our young people especially need to see themselves represented in positions of value, and not just as 'the other'. In this regard, our local writers have the power to craft a positive national identity, to allow us to appreciate each others' truths, to celebrate our existence and the promise of our future".

LOOKING FOR CLAUDIA JONES DOCUMENTARY SCREENED AT T&T HIGH COMMISSION

On Monday 28th October, Looking for Claudia Jones was screened at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London. A compelling documentary, the film detailed the exceptional life and impact of Claudia Jones, the dynamic Trinidad and Tobago born civil rights activist. Jones was a champion of justice and equality, and dedicated her life to that struggle.

Claudia Jones moved to the USA as a child to join her family and became politicised as a result of the discrimination faced by black people, who were treated as second-class citizens because of Jim Crow segregation.

When in the cold war era of the 1950s her political beliefs became too hot to handle, the US government imprisoned and then deported Claudia, a victim of the McCarthyite communist witch-hunts of the period. She was branded an "enemy of the state" and forced into exile in Britain.

The documentary revealed how she turned adversity into opportunity - creating an impressive legacy of social and political activism in the UK that resonates even today.

With a directorial debut by Writer-Director Nia Reynolds and narration by Josette Simon (Cry Freedom), Looking for Claudia Jones proved to be a unique profile of a woman of vision and action.

Pictured: *Tourism Attaché Ms Achi Kemba Phillips with Della McKenzie, James Fairweather, Donald Hinds, Eric Levy, and Nia Reynolds, writer and director of the film*

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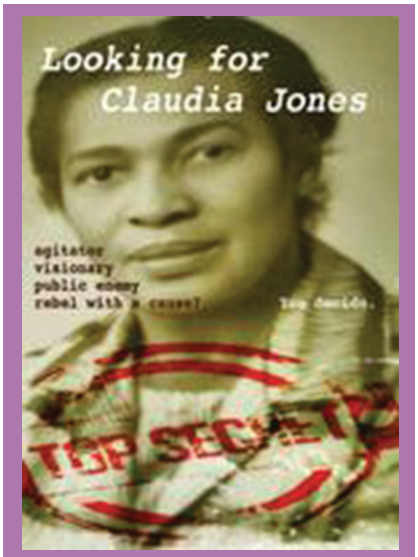

See the Official Trailers on Youtube and Vimeo

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mYEPQO6UEE

http://vimeo.com/11358978

UPCOMING MISSION EVENTS

JANUARY

29th: Nationals' Meeting

FEBRUARY

8th: Ulric Cross Rememberance Service
19th: T&T Professionals' Meeting
26th: Nationals' Meeting

MARCH

26th: Nationals' Meeting

** Events will be added and updated to the High Commission's website:* ***www.tthighcommission.co.uk***

Make sure to register as a national either by email or in the High Commission to keep abreast of our exciting events!

RESILIENCE WITH DIGNITY

The following is an excerpt of the key note feature address delivered by Mrs. Asela El Morsy on Saturday 19th October at the High Commission as part of the Eid-ul-Adha Celebrations.

There are two major festivals in Islam; Eid ul Fitr, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan; and Eid ul-Adha, the most important, festival which marks the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah. The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and it is said that when you return you are like a new born baby without sin and therefore have been given a second chance at life.

The entire premise for the pilgrimage is the life of the Prophet Abraham (upon whom be peace). In each of the five daily prayers Muslims pray for peace and blessings for him and his family. The first house of God, the Kaaba in Makkah was built by Abraham (uwbp) before the Temple of Solomon, and Muslims circle the Kaaba at the start of the Hajj.

The next stage is re-enactment of the story of Hagar and Ishmael (blessings be upon them) being stranded in the desert, because of the jealousy of Sarah. The distraught mother ran to the tops of the mounts searching for help, while the baby kicked in the sand and finally a spring came from the ground beneath him and they were able to survive until Abraham (uwbp) returned for them. When the child was fourteen, God commanded Abraham (uwbp) to kill the thing he loved the most and he took his wife and son into the desert to sacrifice the boy. Along the way Satan tried to stop them, by appearing to each one, asking how they could obey such a cruel command and they drove him away by pelting stones. In the final hour as the blade was about to strike and Abraham (uwbp) had shown his intention to be true, he was ordered to stop and sacrifice a sheep in thanksgiving.

The relevancy of the Hajj is much more than a re-enactment, it is a lesson that through every test of faith there is deliverance, for there is much to be learnt by all of us in looking at the resilience of Hagar and the act of the pilgrimage itself. Pilgrims are required to divest themselves of debt and worldly thoughts and go with an intention of a fresh start. Once there, they adopt the simplest white clothing and stand equal before God, as they will on the Day of Judgement.

Just as the pilgrims reflect on their lives and stand in hope of how they will live in the future, for all Muslims this is a time to think on: what I have done in my life, what impact do my actions have on those around me and what can I do better.

This reflection could easily lead us to feel that the person who invented sliced bread has a great deal to answer for. From the moment society had ease, convenience, and effort was minimized, we seemed to have lost the will to strive.

We used to work at everything and be grateful for whatever we earned because we had an appreciation. Yet, according to Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts: "Humans have a knack of choosing precisely the things that are worst for them."

However, there is little use in talking of the problems of morality in this day and age when the problem is more deep-rooted and the solutions a matter of personal responsibility. All religions are a way of life, a means of communication with fellow human beings. When Muslims open each prayer with "Alhamdu-lillahi Rabil Aalameen" we are acknowledging that "All praise is due to God, Lord of all the world" – not just Muslims.

God expressed the human aim to all the major religions and the best-known example is in the Lord's Prayer; it is that God's kingdom might come and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is a universal aim which excludes no-one and in which everyone can play a part. It threatens the vested interests of corruption, because we develop a sense of what is vital, a sense of purpose.

To read the full feature address in London Mission online edition please visit:

tthighcommission.co.uk/index.
php/media-gallery/newsletter

T&T NATIONALS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AT THE HIGH COMMISSION

On a foggy night in London, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora gathered at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission to create a festive Trinbagonian Christmas atmosphere for their annual Nationals' Christmas party.

The event was held on Wednesday 11th December and was organised by the Nationals, led by Mr. James Mungal, with the support of the High Commission.

Mr. Mungal took to the podium to thank His Excellency Garvin Nicholas for his unparalleled work as High Commissioner and support of the Diaspora, sentiments which were met with rousing applause from the audience.

The High Commissioner thanked the nationals for their support during his tenure. "I have been proud to serve as High Commissioner for all of you over the past three years," he stated. "There is no division when it comes to Trinidad and Tobago for me. Your background or personal affiliation do not matter to me - I have been pleased to serve all members of my Diaspora".

A number of guests contributed tasty dishes to the buffet dinner, including local Christmas favourites such as pastelles, ham and black cake.

Guests enjoyed the opportunity to strengthen connections with their fellow nationals. Lively groups chatted and gathered to play card games, and the parang music kept the crowd in a merry mood well into the night.

The event truly illustrated the togetherness of the Christmas season, and inspired stronger bonds among the Trinbagonian Diaspora in London.

1) The High Commissioner welcomes guests; 2) Dinner is served; 3) The High Commissioner chats with a guest; 4) Nationals dance the night away; Guests patronise the bar; 5) The High Commissioner enjoys a dance with a national;6) Guests focus on their card game; 7) Guests patronise the bar; 8) The High Commissioner shares a laugh with a group of nationals

NOVEMBER NATIONALS' MEETING

There was a festive spirit in the air when His Excellency Garvin Nicholas hosted the final Nationals Meeting for the year at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London on Wednesday 27th November. Addressing a packed room of Trinbagonian nationals, Nicholas noted that the meeting marked his third year as High Commissioner, a tenure which had brought him great satisfaction.

"The past three years have brought me great satisfaction and joy," Nicholas remarked. "I have strived to treat you all with warmth and understanding, regardless of background and allegiance. We have come a long way together, and I have thoroughly enjoyed representing you and our country. I hope I have made you proud".

The High Commissioner was warmly received by the audience and was thanked for his tireless service as well as the exceptional events he has opened up to nationals during his tenure, most recently the largest ever Eid celebration at the Mission and a grand Divali celebration which was held at the High Commissioner's residence.

The Meeting took place amidst a hectic schedule for the High Commissioner, who had recently returned to London after attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka, and was currently participating in a week long conference at the International Maritime Organisation.

H.E. Nicholas opened the floor to questions from the nationals, which yielded significant insight into several pressing matters, including the ongoing appeal by Caribbean High Commissioners for the re-banding of the Air Passenger Duty (APD) tax levied on Caribbean flights from the United Kingdom. The High Commissioner divulged that he and other colleagues had made the APD re-banding a matter of urgent priority at this year's CHOGM, and had held promising bilateral talks with the British Foreign Secretary. H.E. Nicholas revealed that the Caribbean High Commissioners had received firm assurances that the matter would be dealt with in the near future.

Pictured: *His Excellency addresses the audience; Below: The High Commissioner chats with some nationals*

The High Commissioner also shared some of his ongoing plans to Direct Foreign Investment into the local economy, emphasising the necessity of implementing initiatives which can ultimately raise national operational standards. H.E. Nicholas reiterated the need to pursue ventures which would diversify Trinidad and Tobago's economy and establish long term global partnerships and sustainable livelihoods.

H.E. Nicholas also took the time to acknowledge the passing of

a longstanding and well-loved member of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora, Ms. Syliva Shoon, noting that her dedication to the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission and her love for her culture would leave a lasting legacy.

As he closed the meeting, the High Commissioner thanked all nationals, many of whom, like Ms. Shoon, had assisted him greatly throughout the last three years. "My nationals have become my second family," he stated. "Having a strong Diaspora really helps the High Commission carry out its mandate, and all of you have made this job worthwhile for me".

Above: *High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas address the Nationals;* ***Below:*** *High Commissioner speaks with nationals after the Meeting.*

T&T PROFESSIONALS CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

On Friday 22nd November, the Trade & Business Division held a Christmas Social for our Diaspora professionals. Nationals enjoyed a traditional Trinbagonian Christmas meal and ended the night singing and dancing to parang.

EVENT ROUND UP

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DAY

Tourism Attaché Ms. Achi-Kemba Phillips and Mrs. Beverley Awonaya teach the children of Eaton House primary school about Trinidad and Tobago

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